UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/AC.51/1997/L.4/Add.29
3 July 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Thirty-seventh session
9 June-3 July 1997
Agenda item 8

DRAFT REPORT

Rapporteur: Mrs. Sharon BRENNEN-HAYLOCK (Bahamas)

Addendum

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999 (item 4 (a))

Section 27. Administrative services

1. At its 25th to 27th meetings, on 27 and 30 June 1997, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 27, Administrative services, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. It had before it the proposed programme budgets in respect of subsection 27A, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, 27B, Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, 27D, Support services, 27F, Administration, Geneva, 27G, Administration, Vienna, and 27H, Administration, Nairobi, of section 27.

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management introduced section 27, indicating that the Department of Administration and Management would be taking the lead in the implementation of the Secretary-General's proposed reorientation and transformation of the management of the United Nations. Furthermore, he indicated that the focus of the work for the next biennium would be on strengthening management, strategic planning and performance monitoring functions. High priority would be given to the effective and coherent exercise of management functions, the establishment and maintenance of clear lines of responsibility and accountability and enhancement of the responsiveness of the Secretariat to the changing and growing needs of the Organization.

3. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the diversity of work of the Department of Administration and Management, activities of which included the management of financial resources, human resources and support operations. Those services provided the backbone for the efficient and effective functioning of the work of the Organization, and efficient administrative services paved the way for useful and timely delivery of outputs and services to Member States.

Discussion

4. A number of delegations were pleased to note that the Department of Administration and Management would take the lead in the implementation of the Secretary-General's proposed reorientation and transformation of the management of the United Nations. A large number of delegations expressed appreciation for the importance accorded to the activities of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the additional post requested to service the Committee. Many delegations attached great importance to the activities of section 27 and appreciated the serious attempts made in achieving reductions.

5. Several delegations were concerned that the proposals of the Secretary-General in connection with subsection 27C, Human resources management, and subsection 27E, Conference services, of section 27, Administrative services, had not been issued at the time of the review of the section by the Committee.

6. With regard to gratis personnel, some delegations expressed concern about the use of gratis personnel in this section, indicating that recourse to such personnel should have been only in cases where skills were not available in the Organization. The same delegations indicated that justifications on the particular skills possessed by those gratis personnel should have been provided in the programme narrative. They expressed the view that, had resources for posts been provided to carry out the activities of the programme, gratis personnel would not have been required. Those delegations pointed out that gratis personnel should not perform functions of a delicate or confidential character, for example in the areas of administration of justice and procurement. Another delegation pointed to the conflict of interest when gratis personnel performed functions that should be performed by staff recruited under the relevant rules and regulations of the Organization.

7. Many delegations commented on the need to restructure the Procurement and Transportation Division, taking into account the procurement reform decision adopted by the General Assembly (50/479 of 11 April 1996), including projection of staff requirements and the filling of posts by United Nations personnel.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. The Committee took note of the narratives contained in the proposed programme budget of subsections 27A, 27B, 27D, 27F, 27G and 27H of section 27, Administrative services, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, subject to further consideration as stated in paragraph 35 of the introduction. The Committee noted with regret that it did not have the proposals in respect of subsections 27C, Human resources and management, and

27E, Conference services. In the absence of proposals related to those subprogrammes, the Committee was not in a position to make any comments in connection with the Secretary-General's proposals in that regard.

9. The Committee took note of the explanation of the Secretariat that in the past the Committee had not reviewed the sections of the proposed programme budget relating to administrative services. Consequently, in the context of the issuance of the fascicles, that section was scheduled to be issued last to enable the timely release of those sections that historically had been considered by the Committee. Unfortunately, the demands on documentation arising from the special session of the General Assembly on sustainable development resulted in further delay of the issuance, in all the official languages, of subsections 27C and 27E.